



March 2013



**A newsletter for the Veterans and their families from the
Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian community.**

VA Hires More Mental Health Professionals to Expand Access for Veterans

Part of Comprehensive Effort to Boost Mental Health Services

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WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) today announced that it has made significant progress in providing increased access to mental health care services for our Nation’s Veterans by hiring new mental health professionals. Last year, Secretary Eric K. Shinseki announced a goal to hire 1,600 new mental health clinical providers and 300 administrative support staff. The President’s Aug. 31, 2012, Executive Order requires the positions to be filled by June 30, 2013. As of Jan. 29, VA has hired 1,058 mental health clinical providers and 223 administrative support staff in support of this specific goal.

“We aren’t slowing down our efforts even after these initial positive results,” said Shinseki. “We still need to hire more mental health professionals in order to reach our goal, but each new hire means we can treat more Veterans and provide greater access to our mental health services.”

Overall, VA has set aggressive goals to fill these new positions as well as existing and projected mental health vacancies within the VA system. As of Jan. 29, VA has hired a total of 3,262 mental health professionals and administrative support staff to serve Veterans since the goal was announced, which includes the new 1,058 mental health clinical providers and 223 administrative support staff. The mental health professionals hired include psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, mental health nurses, licensed professional mental health counselors, licensed marriage and family therapists, and addictions therapists.

VA provides a comprehensive system of high-quality mental health treatments and services to Veterans. The department is utilizing many tools to recruit and retain one of the largest mental health care workforces in the nation to serve Veterans better by providing enhanced services, expanded access, longer clinic hours, and increased telemental health capability to deliver services.

“Today, as Veterans return home from missions in Afghanistan and those who previously returned from Iraq, it is imperative that we ensure they have access to timely, high-quality mental health care,” said Undersecretary for Health Dr. Robert A. Petzel. “The invisible scars of war follow them as they return from theater. It is our responsibility to identify these wounds, treat them and prevent the long-term physical, mental and social consequences of them.”

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In accordance with the President's Aug. 31, 2012, [Executive Order](#), VA has also completed hiring and training of additional staff to increase the capacity of the Veterans Crisis Line (1-800-273-8255, press 1) and phone lines have been increased by 50 percent. As of Dec. 31, 2012, the Veterans Crisis Line has received over 747,000 calls, over 83,000 chats, as well as over 5,000 texts, and has saved more than 26,000 Veterans in imminent danger.

There are many Veterans who are willing to seek treatment and to share their experiences with mental health issues when they share a common bond of duty, honor, and service with the provider. VA is in the process of hiring and training 800 Peer Specialists in the coming year. Additionally, VA has awarded a contract to the Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance to provide certification training for Peer Specialists. This peer staff is expected to all be hired by Dec. 31, 2013, and will work as members of mental health teams.

The number of Veterans receiving specialized mental health treatment from VA has risen each year, from 927,052 in fiscal year (FY) 2006 to more than 1.3 million in FY 2012. One major reason for this increase is VA's proactive screening of all Veterans to identify those who may have symptoms of depression, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), problem use of alcohol or who have experienced military sexual trauma (MST).

Mental health care providers seeking opportunities to serve our Nation's Veterans can find additional information about rewarding VA careers and apply for jobs online at www.vacareers.va.gov and www.usajobs.gov. To locate the nearest VA facility or Vet Center for enrollment and to get scheduled for care, Veterans can visit VA's website at www.va.gov.

VA Affirms Commitment to Innovation

VA Innovation Initiative Introduces Transformation to New Center for Innovation

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs is launching the VA Center for Innovation (VACI), affirming its commitment to innovation and building on the success of the VA Innovation Initiative (VAi2).

“Ideas are the heart of innovation and VACI provides a dynamic ecosystem that lowers the barrier of entry for innovation within VA,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. “The new Innovation Fellows Program, Entrepreneur-in-Residence Program, and Partnerships Program will bring proven innovators from government and the private sector into VA to focus on high-opportunity areas.”

Launched in 2010, VAI2 established a portfolio of more than 120 innovation projects that help VA identify, test, and evaluate promising solutions that enhance the accessibility and quality of care and services delivered to Veterans. As a permanent part of the department, VACI, which will be the new name for VAI2, will continue to tap talent from government, industry, and the entrepreneurial community. Also, VACI will add several new programs that expand VA's capacity to embrace innovative ideas and address VA's most critical challenges.

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Confidential Help For Veterans and Their Families



"I AM A VETERAN."
Calling the confidential Veterans
Crisis Line can help. I know."



Helping you,
help your Veteran

1-888-823-7458

What is Coaching Into Care?

Coaching Into Care provides a “coaching” service for family and friends of Veterans who see that their Veteran needs help. Coaching involves helping the caller figure out how to motivate their Veteran to seek services. The service is free and provided by licensed clinical social workers and psychologists. The goal of the service is to help the Veteran and family members find the appropriate services in their community.

Coaching Into Care takes your privacy, and that of your Veteran, very seriously. We keep all calls confidential, except for cases in which we act to protect the lives of you, your Veteran, or others.

What is the primary goal of Coaching Into Care?

The primary goal of this call center is to help Veterans struggling with mental health issues engage in VA health care in order to treat and help these individuals lead a healthy life.

What is meant by “coaching?”

Coaching involves working with a caller to reach their goal of helping a Veteran in several ways: providing information about mental health issues, discussing the best ways to communicate with the Veteran, and discussing ways to solve logistical problems about obtaining VA care.

May Veterans Call with questions or concerns?

Yes. Coaching Into Care can help Veterans find the right resource, treatment facility or Vet Center that they need.

How does a caller reach Coaching Into Care?

The toll-free telephone number is (888) 823-7458. We can work with callers between 8am and 8pm ET, Monday - Friday. Outside of these times, a staff member will take the caller’s contact information and questions, and we will return the call during the next business day.

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VACI has launched a new web site, released its first annual report, and announced thirteen new awards from its industry innovation competition. These awards respond to needs identified by VA senior leadership and are focused on teleaudiology, prosthetic socket redesign, Blue Button, and automating the sterilization process for reusable medical instruments.

a core competency and an ongoing practice in the second-largest federal agency. “By knitting together innovative talent and 21st century solutions into a vital ecosystem, we ensure that VA meets the evolving needs of current and future Veterans with energy and imagination,” said Director of VACI Jonah Czerwinski.

For more information about VACI, see our new website: www.innovation.va.gov.

VETERANS BILL HB2484 Passes the State House of Representatives...

CONGRATULATIONS VETERANS!!

in a 47-11-2-0-0 Vote HB2484 Passed the House

A summary of the bill is as follows:

HB 2484- veterans; hiring preference; tax credit

Would require the Arizona Department of Administration and the Arizona Department of Veterans' Services to “coordinate to develop and implement procedures that provide veterans with access to an employment announcement 72 hours before public dissemination of the employment announcement”.

Further, it would establish a tax credit up to four thousand dollars for taxpayers who hire an honorably discharged unemployed veteran. Amendment adopted in House PSMRA to specify that tax credit is made for hiring unemployed veterans.

An amendment adopted in House PSMRA to additionally require the Arizona Department of Administration to establish a goal of awarding 1.5% of state contracts to veteran-owned businesses increasing 3% or more for each year after the first year and require the Arizona Department of Veterans' Services to establish a registry of veteran-owned businesses and verify the veteran status and eligibility of businesses seeking to be considered for the registry.

Original Sponsors:

Rep. Mark Cardenas, D-Dist. 19; Rep. Sonny Borrelli, R-Dist. 5; et al

SRPMIC VETERANS AFFAIRS WEBSITE:
[HTTP://WWW.SRPMIC-NSN.GOV/COMMUNITY/VETERANS/](http://www.srpmic-nsn.gov/community/veterans/)

Survivors and Dependents Assistance

Summary of Benefits

Dependents' Educational Assistance provides education and training opportunities to eligible dependents of certain veterans. The program offers up to 45 months of education benefits. These benefits may be used for degree and certificate programs, apprenticeship, and on-the-job training. If you are a spouse, you may take a correspondence course. Remedial, deficiency, and refresher courses may be approved under certain circumstances.

Eligibility

You must be the son, daughter, or spouse of:

- A veteran who died or is permanently and totally disabled as the result of a service-connected disability. The disability must arise out of active service in the Armed Forces.
- A veteran who died from any cause while such permanent and total service-connected disability was in existence.
- A servicemember missing in action or captured in line of duty by a hostile force.
- A servicemember forcibly detained or interned in line of duty by a foreign government or power.

A servicemember who is hospitalized or receiving outpatient treatment for a service connected permanent and total disability and is likely to be discharged for that disability. This change is effective December 23, 2006.

Period of Eligibility

If you are a son or daughter and wish to receive benefits for attending school or job training, you must be between the ages of 18 and 26. In certain instances, it is possible to begin before age 18 and to continue after age 26. Marriage is not a bar to this benefit. If you are in the Armed Forces, you may not receive this benefit while on active duty. To pursue training after military service, your discharge must not be under dishonorable conditions. VA can extend your period of eligibility by the number of months and days equal to the time spent on active duty. This extension cannot generally go beyond your 31st birthday, there are some exceptions.

If you are a spouse, benefits end 10 years from the date VA finds you eligible or from the date of death of the veteran. If the VA rated the veteran permanently and totally disabled with an effective date of 3 years from discharge a spouse will remain eligible for 20 years from the effective date of the rating. This change is effective October 10, 2008 and no benefits may be paid for any training taken prior to that date.

For surviving spouses (spouses of service members who died on active duty) benefits end 20 years from the date of death.

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2013 Hiring Our Heroes Job Fair – Phoenix, AZ

University of Phoenix
1625 W. Fountainhead Parkway
Tempe, Az 85282
April 25, 2013

HIRING FAIR: 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

This University of Phoenix sponsored hiring event is being conducted by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation, Greater Phoenix Chamber of Commerce the Department of Labor Veterans' Employment and Training Service (DOL VETS), the Arizona Committee of the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR), the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Arizona Department of Employment Security, The American Legion, NBC News, and other local partners.

Please join us at 9am to gain insight on career planning by attending a special panel discussion featuring local representatives from the military and University of Phoenix military alumni.

EMPLOYERS

Must have available jobs.
Register for **FREE** at HOH.Greatjob.net

JOB SEEKERS

Veterans, Active Duty Military, Members Of Guard And Reserve Components, Military Spouses
Register for **FREE** at HOH.Greatjob.net
to guarantee admission. Walk-ins welcome but space not guaranteed.



WWW.HIRINGOURHEROES.ORG

monster | Military.com

is the official online partner for Hiring Our Heroes | Find Hiring Our Heroes online:



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How to Apply

You should make sure that your selected program is approved for VA training. If you are not clear on this point, VA will inform you and the school or company about the requirements.

Obtain and complete VA Form 22-5490, Application for Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance. Send it to the VA regional office with jurisdiction over the State where you will train. If you are a son or daughter, under legal age, a parent or guardian must sign the application.

If you have started training, take your application to your school or employer. Ask them to complete VA Form 22-1999, Enrollment Certification, and send both forms to VA.

Section 301 of Public Law 109-461 adds a new category to the definition of "eligible person" for DEA benefits. The new category includes the spouse or child of a person who:

VA determines has a service-connected permanent and total disability; and at the time of VA's determination is a member of the Armed Forces who is hospitalized or receiving outpatient medical care, services, or treatment; and is likely to be discharged or released from service for this service-connected disability.

Persons eligible under this new provision may be eligible for DEA benefits effective December 23, 2006, the effective date of the law.

DEA provides education and training opportunities to eligible dependents of veterans who are permanently and totally disabled due to a service-related condition, or who died while on active duty or as a result of a service related condition. The program offers up to 45 months of education benefits. These benefits may be used for degree and certificate programs, apprenticeship, and on-the-job training. If you are a spouse, you may take a correspondence course. Remedial, deficiency, and refresher courses may be approved under certain circumstances.

Special Restorative Training is available to persons eligible for DEA benefits. The Department of Veterans Affairs may prescribe special restorative training where needed to overcome or lessen the effects of a physical or mental disability for the purpose of enabling an eligible person to pursue a program of education, special vocational program or other appropriate goal. Medical care and treatment or psychiatric treatments are not included.

Special Vocational Training is also available to persons eligible for DEA benefits. This type of program may be approved for an eligible person who is not in need of Special Restorative Training, but who requires such a program because of a mental or physical handicap.

From one Soldier to Another

"The truth of the matter is that you always know the right thing to do. The hard part is doing it."
General Norman Schwarzkopf

"The soldier above all others prays for peace, for it is the soldier who must suffer and bear the deepest wounds and scars of war."

Douglas MacArthur

VFW Calls Out TIME Columnist

VFW outraged that a TIME magazine columnist has called for the resignation of

VA Secretary Eric Shinseki

March 15, 2013

WASHINGTON — The national commander of the nation's largest war veterans organization is outraged that a TIME magazine columnist has called for the resignation of Veterans Affairs Secretary Eric Shinseki.

“Freedom of the press isn’t a license for Joe Klein to twist reality about someone who has volunteered virtually his entire life to serve his country,” said John E. Hamilton, who leads the 2 million-member Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S. and its Auxiliaries. Klein's column, entitled “Ten Years After: A National Disgrace,” is posted on the magazine's website and is being published in its March 25 edition.

“Secretary Shinseki has one of the toughest jobs in America,” said Hamilton, a combat wounded Marine Corps rifleman in Vietnam. “It is his responsibility to heal, help and care for our wounded, ill and injured veterans from all generations. What he doesn’t need is criticism from those who have little or no understanding of the real issues or challenges facing his department.”

In his column, Klein criticizes Shinseki for being quiet and reserved, as if the secretary of the nation’s largest integrated healthcare network and second largest federal department has time for a publicized social life. Klein hides behind a so-called “legion” of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans who say the secretary lacks the creativity and leadership skills to run the VA, plus sympathizes with their complaint of not being moved to the front of the line ahead of other — but older — disabled veterans. Still worse, Klein accuses Shinseki of not capitalizing on the mass murder allegedly committed by an Army staff sergeant in Afghanistan.

“What occurred in Afghanistan was a tragedy, not an opportunity,” said Hamilton. “The Department of Defense and the VA expend an enormous amount of resources on programs and outreach to provide mental health counseling to those in need, but you can’t mandate any program that first requires someone to voluntarily step forward and ask for help. That same limitation also confronts all of us who are in this battle to end military and veteran suicides.

“And regarding the columnist’s personal attack, just because the secretary prefers a lower profile to someone who might ‘Tweet’ their every movement doesn’t mean he doesn’t care. It just means he’s too busy doing his job, and that’s to fulfill our nation’s promise to her veterans.”



How Can eBenefits Assist Me?

You can apply for Compensation, Pension, Education, Burial and Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment Benefits online

For years the VFW has testified before Congress about the lack of funding for the VA's Veterans Benefits Administration, especially in the areas of automation and proper staffing. Hamilton said the secretary did the absolute right thing to grant additional presumptive service connections for Vietnam and first Gulf War veterans, but he acknowledged that organizations like the VFW and others who employ service officers to help veterans file their claims knew that the increased workload would overwhelm the existing system.

Thanks to the president and Congress, the VA now has the necessary resources to automate the claims processing system. This means the VA is moving in the right direction, said the VFW national commander, but after years of neglect, the fix will not come overnight.

"We want the VA to succeed, and that's why we work closely with Secretary Shinseki and his staff to help identify and correct problems in a professional manner from within, not by enlisting the media to sensationalize issues the great majority of Americans and, quite frankly, many veterans don't understand," said Hamilton.

"The VFW helped to create the VA in 1930. We will not let it fail. We will also continue to take strong issue with people who blindly criticize the organization or its secretary, who is a combat wounded veteran who understands what it means to serve and sacrifice. Secretary Shinseki gets it, and America should be very appreciative that he volunteered to stay for another tour — the VFW is."



Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community, Veterans Affairs

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